

THINK SECURITY. PRACTICE SAFETY.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

RING UP SOMEONE

And, while you're at it, ring up some savings. Thanks to a new USPS wireless agreement, employees can receive a 13 percent discount on new and existing Cingular Wireless accounts. The discount applies to both business and personal accounts. Also, employees can receive a 20 percent discount on equipment and accessories. All orders will be shipped via USPS.

If you're a new subscriber, call 800-356-9752 to order service. If you're an existing customer, call 866-246-4852, Option 1, to switch over to USPS discounted plans. Please note: The discounts are only available through the toll-free numbers or if a corporate sales representative visits your site. The discounts are not available through Cingular Wireless retail stores, kiosks or agents. The agreement was negotiated by Supply Management. For more information, call Jack Mitchell at 202-268-4655.

SIX MORE MONTHS

The minimum holding period for some series I and EE U.S. Savings Bonds has been extended from six to 12 months, effective with issues dated on and after Feb. 1, 2003. The minimum holding period is the length of time that a bond must be held before it can be redeemed. Series I and EE Savings Bonds with issue dates prior to February 2003 retain the six-month minimum holding period in effect when they were issued.

The longer holding period will prevent purchasers from taking advantage of the current spread between savings bond returns and historically low short-term interest rates by cashing in bonds after six months. Savings Bonds are designed to be a long-term savings vehicle. Read more at www.savingsbonds.gov.

LONG-TERM CARE PROGRAM

Open season for the federal Long Term Care (LTC) Program is now over. Does this mean it's too late to apply? Absolutely not! Eligible career employees may apply for the federal LTC program insurance at any time. The only difference from open season is in the application process. Full underwriting (vs. abbreviated underwriting)

will now be required. LTC Partners website at www.ltcfeds.com has application and program information. If you're still interested in applying visit the website or call 800-LTC-FEDS.

Newly eligible individuals may still apply using the abbreviated underwriting application process, as long as they apply within 60 days of becoming eligible. Newly eligible people include: new career hires and their spouses, employees who are reassigned from noncareer to career positions and their spouses, and newly married spouses of current career employees. Keep in mind that parents, parents-in-law and adult children over age 18 also are eligible to apply (using full underwriting) at any time.

READ ALL ABOUT IT

Don't fight with the kids over that copy of *Rolling Stone*. Get your own subscription through the new USPS Magazine Subscriptions Online. In affiliation with Magazine Mall, Inc., this service offers thousands of consumer and business titles at up to 85 percent off retail prices. And through May 15, you'll get an additional 15 percent discount on magazine subscriptions purchased through the website at www.usps.com/magazines. Just enter discount code USPS35 when you are prompted for your "Promotional Coupon Offer" during checkout.

Good reading at great prices. Publishers increase their subscription bases. USPS gets additional Periodicals revenue. Reading is fundamental.

FEELING AFFINITY'D

Qualified USPS employees won't want to miss out on the special credit card offer available only to USPS employees and their families. By now you should have received information about the offer by mail. The USPS Employee Platinum Visa card is being offered by Bank One. It's an "affinity" card, which groups cardholders by shared interests or shared employment. The USPS eagle logo on the card will reflect your affinity to USPS. Be sure to check out this offer!

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CSRS BILLS INTRODUCED

Legislation has been introduced that would change the way USPS funds its Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) – a move that would help keep rates steady until at least 2006. Similar bills have been introduced in both the House and Senate. Their bipartisan sponsors say the legislation will prevent a \$71 billion overpayment by USPS to CSRS. Tackling the issue early in the 108th Congress "demonstrates our commitment to getting the Postal Service back on solid financial footing and protecting American postal consumers from unnecessary rate increases that would have significant impacts on household budgets and the nation's economy," says Congressman Tom Davis (R-VA), chairman of the House Government Reform Committee.

Two government agencies – the General Accounting Office (GAO) and the Office of

Personnel Management (OPM) – found that based on the current level of contributions, USPS will significantly overfund the amount needed in the future to cover its CSRS obligations. The legislation now awaiting consideration by Congress would reduce USPS's annual obligation to CSRS, with the funds saved used for holding rates steady and debt reduction.

So the ball's in Congress's court. Legislating is their job. Our job is moving the mail. The ball we keep our eyes on is the one marked "USPS transformation." With it, we've got game. We're controlling costs. We're improving productivity. We're delivering for our customers. So far this year, service is exceeding last year's record levels.

Whoosh!

APWU ONLY

The Postal Service and the American Postal Workers Union (APWU) have agreed to petition the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) for the purpose of implementing a Voluntary Early Retirement. The Postal Service has submitted a petition to OPM. When OPM responds to this petition for Voluntary Early Retirement, we'll be able to provide further information. This request covers only APWU-represented employees.

Anthrax investigation: ongoing

Not reading any newspaper headlines about the anthrax investigation lately? Rest assured – the investigation is ongoing. "The Postal Inspection Service continues to be a key component of the Anthrax Task Force," says Chief Postal Inspector Lee Heath. "Investigative tips and leads are still being reported. And they're being pursued vigorously." Since the anthrax attacks were classified a "terrorist activity," the Department of Justice named the FBI the lead investigative agency. As lead agency, the FBI controls the release of public information. "Postal Inspectors are working closely to track the person or persons who mailed the anthrax-laden letters in fall of 2001," says Heath.

Fast, dependable

The past holiday season was the best ever for customers who used our Delivery Confirmation service. Customers waited less than two second, on average, to get a response when they went online to check the status of their Delivery Confirmation mail. The Internet service was accessible to USPS customers an impressive 99.8 percent of the time, above the industry average. The USPS intranet site was accessible to employees 99.8 percent of the time. And over 98 percent of the time, Delivery Confirmation information was available online at www.usps.com within one hour of being transmitted by carriers or sales associates during the holiday season. Sweet!

INDUSTRY WATCH FEWER CHECKS IN THE MAIL

In response to the fact that Americans are writing fewer checks, says the *Washington Post*, the Federal Reserve will stop processing checks at 13 of its 45 sites, close five sites and lay off 400 employees. The *Post* says checks still account for 60 percent of all non-cash retail payments, but that's down from 85 percent in 1979. About 40 billion checks were written last year, says the Fed, down from 50 billion in 1995.

FROM MBE TO UPS

That Mail Boxes Etc. (MBE) in your town may soon be operating with a new name – The UPS Store. UPS, which bought MBE in 2001, will allow 3,300 MBE franchisees based in the United States to covert their retail centers to The UPS Store, according to news reports. UPS says the program also enables store owners to "considerably" lower the prices they offer consumers for UPS air express, ground and international shipping services.

NORTH AMERICAN EXPANSION

DHL Worldwide Express, a subsidiary of Deutsche Post, has expanded in North America with the takeover of Mayne Group Canada, Loomis, reports *Suddeutsche Zeitung*. The deal will make DHL the third-largest operator on the Canadian express services market, as well as strengthening the cross-border activities of DHL in the U.S., the report says.

Spotlight on Priority Mail

Spread the word to customers each and every day – Priority Mail means value and dependability. As USPS rolls out its new advertising campaign focusing on Priority Mail, talk it up. We want customers to be aware of the "Real Time" it takes for a Priority Mail package to be delivered. Don't give them the "2-to-3 day" delivery message. Look it up! Make sure they know "dependable delivery starts at just \$3.85." It's about growing market share, volume and revenue. Spread the word!

Staying safe, welcomed and trusted

They're big. They're very visible. They touch everyone in the nation. They are the Postal Service's delivery vehicles. A postal vehicle and the employee who drives it are a welcomed and trusted sight in all residential and business communities because they signal that USPS is doing what it does best – delivering



keys from the vehicle when it isn't being used, and keep the doors locked. If you're delivering mail, collecting it or transporting it, security can be compromised if the vehicle is left open and out of your immediate control. If you can't keep the vehicle within sight and be absolutely sure

the messages and business communications that America depends on. But we're living in a post 9-11 world now. In these days of heightened awareness, we must do everything in our power to protect our people, our vehicles and the mail entrusted to us. Postal trucks, vehicles and cars with government license plates must be kept under close control.

A few simple precautions can go a long way toward keeping vehicles safe. Each time you inspect your vehicle, visually verify that government license plates are still affixed. Report anything missing immediately. Remove

that neither its interior nor its contents are tampered with, then the vehicle must be locked.

Something doesn't seem quite right? Be aware of suspicious persons hanging around postal vehicles and report the person to a supervisor and the Postal Inspection Service. If mail or a vehicle are stolen, report by phone to your manager and the Postal Inspection Service immediately.

Security is a shared responsibility. Everyone. Everywhere. Every day.

QUOTABLE

"I want to thank everyone who prayed for me. I also want to remind letter carriers to be safe when they are out on their routes. Stay focused and aware."

Carol City, FL, PTF Letter Carrier Tonya Mitchell

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